

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PO, SP, PINT

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE-SPANISH RELATIONS

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER MARIO SOARES'S NOV 21-22 VISIT TO MADRID WILL UNDERSCORE THE STEADY IMPROVEMENT OF PORTUGUESE-SPANISH RELATIONS AS BOTH CONTINUE TO EVOLVE DEMOCRATICALLY. A FRIENDSHIP TREATY IS TO BE SIGNED, REPLACING THE OUTMODED IBERIAN PACT. SOARES, WITH AN EYE ON DOMESTIC POLITICS, WILL HIGHLIGHT THE MONCLOA ACCORDS AS AN EXAMPLE FOR PORTUGAL. END SUMMARY.

1. RECENT IMPROVEMENTS: PRESIDENT EANES'S VISIT TO SPAIN

IN MAY 1977, SPANISH PRIME MINISTER ADOLFO SUAREZ'S

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EARLIER VISIT TO PORTUGAL, AND PRIME MINISTER SOARES'S UPCOMING VISIT TO MADRID HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE BOTH COUNTRIES ATTACH TO DEVELOPING CLOSER TIES. RECENT SENIOR-LEVEL BILATERAL MEETINGS HAVE ALREADY ADDRESSED A SERIES OF SPECIFIC ISSUES. IN ADDITION TO A JOINT MEETING OF MILITARY CHIEFS IN MARCH 1977, OTHER JOINT COMMISSIONS MET:

-- IN MARCH 1976 TO DISCUSS THE USE OF RIVERS IN THE BORDER AREAS;
-- IN FEBRUARY 1977 TO DISCUSS BORDER QUESTIONS;
-- IN APRIL 1977 TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC PROSPECTS; AND,
-- IN MAY 1977 TO DISCUSS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A CULTURAL AGREEMENT.

2. NEW FRIENDSHIP TREATY: THE CENTERPIECE OF SOARES'S VISIT WILL BE SIGNATURE OF A FRIENDSHIP TREATY TO REPLACE THE PRE-WORLD WAR II IBERIAN PACT. THE NEW TREATY WILL BE A GENERAL STATEMENT SETTING THE FRAMEWORK FOR CLOSER PORTUGUESE-SPANISH COOPERATION.

3. OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS: ALTHOUGH ISSUES REMAIN, A "DON'T-ROCK-THE-BOAT" ATTITUDE PREVAILS. GOP PAYMENT FOR DAMAGES TO THE SPANISH EMBASSY AND RESIDENCE AS A RESULT OF THE 1975 RIOTS PROTESTING THE EXECUTIONS OF BASQUE DISSIDENTS ARE "PROGRESSING," BUT NO PAYMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR THE ART MASTERPIECES DESTROYED. NOR HAS THERE YET BEEN ANY COMPENSATION FOR SPANISH-OWNED PROPERTIES IN THE ALENTEJO EITHER SEIZED BY FARM WORKERS OR NATIONALIZED. SPANISH EMBASSY HAS EMPHASIZED THAT THEY DO NOT FEEL COMPELLED TO PRESS EITHER OF THESE ISSUES NOW SINCE THE GOP HAS PROMISED PUBLICLY TO INDEMNIFY THE SPANISH. NEITHER SUBJECT WAS RAISED DURING SOARES'S MAY 1977 VISIT, AND THE SPANISH EMBASSY HERE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DOUBTS THEY WILL BE DISCUSSED DURING THE SOARES VISIT FOR THE SIGNING OF THE NEW FRIENDSHIP TREATY.

4. FUTURE CONCERNS: PORTUGUESE AND SPANISH DIPLOMATS HERE CLAIM THEY ARE SATISFIED WITH PROGRESS IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, BUT BOTH REALIZE THAT DELICATE ISSUES LIE AHEAD. A GOP FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT THE PORTUGUESE WOULD LIKE TO SEE SPAIN IN NATO, BUT VOICED CONCERN REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF SUCH SIMILAR ECONOMIES IN THE COMMON MARKET. SPECIAL BILATERAL AGRICULTURAL AGREEMENTS APPEAR UNAVOIDABLE.

5. COMMENT: THE MADRID VISIT WILL PROVIDE SCANT RELIEF FROM SOARES'S PRESSING POLITICAL CONCERNS AT HOME. THE RELEASE BY THE SPANISH MEDIA OF A REPORT THAT THE SOARES GOVERNMENT WAS ON THE VERGE OF RESIGNATION HAS BROUGHT A HEATED DENIAL FROM SOARES'S CHIEF OF CABINET ALFREDO BARROSO AND A FORMAL REPRESENTATION BY PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR CUNHA REGO IN MADRID. WHILE ATTEMPTING TO PUT THE LID ON SUCH SPECULATION DURING HIS VISIT, SOARES CAN ALSO BE EXPECTED TO HIGHLIGHT THE MONCLOA ACCORDS AS A MODEL FOR PORTUGAL.

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